

Nimuendajá: The Eastern Timbira

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Juçára (<i>Euterpe</i> sp.)	Piquy (<i>Caryocar</i> sp.)
Bacaba (<i>Oenocarpus</i> sp.)	Mocajuba (<i>Acerocoma</i> sp.)
Bapucala (<i>Lezythis</i> sp.)	Mangaba (<i>Hancornia</i> sp.)
Cariti (?)	Cajá (<i>Anacardium</i> sp.)
Guabiroba	Araçá (<i>Peidium</i> sp.)
Bacury (<i>Platanus</i> sp.)	Côco = babassu (<i>Orbignia</i> sp.)
Puçá	

Strangely enough, he omits the palm that is one of the most, if not the most, important of species for the Timbira, namely, the burity (*Mauritia flexuosa*).

Snethlage thus supplements the list:²²

Piamava (<i>Attalea</i> sp.)	Paty (<i>Astrocaryum</i> sp.)
Catulé (<i>Coccoloba</i>)	Muricy (<i>Brytonima</i> sp.)
(Various <i>Astrocaryas</i>)	

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Of all the species named only four are really important in supplying a sufficiency of food during part of the year, viz., the four palms of the *galeria* woods—juçára, bacaba, babassu, and burity.

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From the fleshy layer of the seeds of the juçára, bacaba, and burity fruits the Indians prepare more or less viscid beverages, which are very nutritious by reason of their fatty content. They are strained through little round strainers, plaited from uarumá strips, whose ends are twisted together into a peripheral pad (pl. 20, c). The babassu yields for food not only its strongly oleaginous seeds, but also the indwelling larvae of *Bruchus nucleorum*,²³ which we have noted as used for hair pomade. The seeds are pounded in a mortar, and the pulp is rinsed with water, whence there evolves a fatty, white juice, which is poured through the above-mentioned strainer.

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Anciently tribes waged war over stands of babassu, as in the fighting between the Krahô' and the Pôrekamekra noted by Pohl.²⁴ It was obviously this palm whose ownership was at stake; for it is especially common on the left bank of the Tocantina.

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Ribeiro mentions the mocajuba trunk as a source of food and drink, a use I have never myself noted. On the other hand, the palmitos, leaf shoots, of the juçára and especially of the anajá (*Maximiliana regia*) are occasionally consumed even today.

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In times of dearth the Ramkô'kamekra prepare a kind of flour from the root of the patioba (*Caladium* sp.; Timbira: mriti), which grows in the water of creeks and swamps.

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As an article of diet, wild honey is equally insignificant. Snethlage describes the procedure of hacking it out of the trees and pouring it into gourd bottles. I have never seen beehives in Timbira villages.

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Except for honey, the gathering of wild food is principally a feminine task; even nowadays women and girls are rather addicted to it. Marching through the steppe, they glance all around, almost instinctively securing the country, and collect whatever comes near them into a gourd bowl, which they generally take along on such trips. Sometimes a large bevy of girls, especially young ones, jointly roam over the steppe for days in quest of fruits. In order not to miss their customary dances every night, they take a precentor with them, but otherwise decline a male escort and would manhandle any lad who should thrust his company upon them. During one of these marches, in 1933, I observed the following remarkable terminal performance.

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During the last period of seclusion of the initiation festival held at the time a dozen girls with the precentor Kaukré and his wife marched about forty kilometers

²² Nordostbras. Ind., 160.²³ Cf. Fröes Abren, Terra das Palmeiras, 54.²⁴ Pohl, 2:137.